



INTERNATIONAL  
SOCIAL SERVICE  
**2016**  
GLOBAL REPORT



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Please note that names and situations have been changed to guarantee confidentiality in the cases, stories and testimonies throughout this report



# 1. A WELCOME NOTE

from ISS General Secretariat team

ISS was born out of a simple idea, 93 years ago, following largescale migrations from Europe and the Middle East towards the Americas in the aftermath of World War One. ISS was originally set up to provide a “reunification” service for families who became separated along the migration routes. Today, that mission remains practically the same: assisting migrating families and children separated by borders. That simple idea has turned into a **global network**.

ISS of today remains an agile and flexible organisation that employs professionals applying agreed standards set forth by international children’s rights and child protection conventions, through socio-legal services for the benefit of people it supports and assists.

With legal frameworks set by these conventions partially addressing the overall problem facing children and families on the migration routes, ISS professional staff, interns and volunteers who are familiar with these conventions and understand local customs, ‘personalise’ the problem and tailor a solution for it, providing practical, psychological and socio-legal advice to achieve a durable and satisfactory solution.

Working on a case by case basis over and over again, ISS people record individual problems in detail, offer solutions and share the information with other professionals and policy makers. ISS uses this wealth of experience to design direct support and training programmes and advocate for policy development in child protection.

As well as establishing itself over the years as a trusted global partner, ISS recognises it cannot provide solutions to all social cases on its own; it can, however, mobilise professional social networks - whether government authorities, specialised agencies or grassroots organisations - and seek collectively individualised solutions for children and families on the move.



Csizmarik Francisc

## 2. PROGRAMMES

### CROSS-BORDER SOCIAL CASEWORK

In 2016 more than 75,000 families were assisted with psychosocial and socio-legal support throughout the ISS global network. Year after year and for 93 years, ISS has concentrated on protecting children and families separated by borders because of voluntary or forced migration. Each ISS national member is able to offer a **broad range of professional services**.

ISS provides psychosocial and legal support services in cases of Child Protection, Child Abduction, Family Welfare and Family Social Assessments, Family Tracing and Reunification, Custody and Access, Adult Protection, Unaccompanied Minors, Surrogacy and Donor conceived Person as well as pre and past Adoption Support.

To ensure maximum efficiency in serving children and families, ISS members establish professional links with and between social services in different countries and with these services offer the **best durable solution** for children and families.

### FINDING CONCRETE AND LONG-LASTING SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

“The support to families and children facing complex cross border social situations lies at the heart of our daily work at ISS.

Today owing to our child and family focused approach, to members’ close working relationships and to our world-wide presence, ISS global impact is widely recognized by those we serve and professionals alike.

By further expanding and consolidating our network, facilitating communication between children and family protection NGOs and authorities, I am proud to contribute to ISS key role in finding concrete solutions for children and families.”

Seema Pannaikadavil-Thomas  
Coordinator Network Development & Training

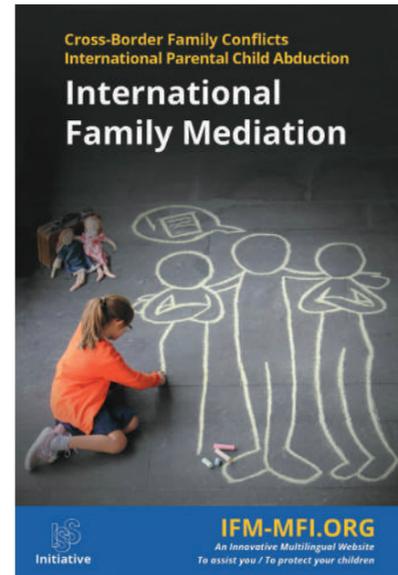
## INTERNATIONAL FAMILY MEDIATION

The main goal of International Family Mediation is to better protect children involved in parental conflicts that span national borders. ISS strives to raise awareness of the legal complexity of cross-border family cases and highlights International Family Mediation as an efficient tool to solve cross-border family disputes and to prevent child abductions. ISS's main focus is always the best interests of the child caught in the middle of a family dispute.

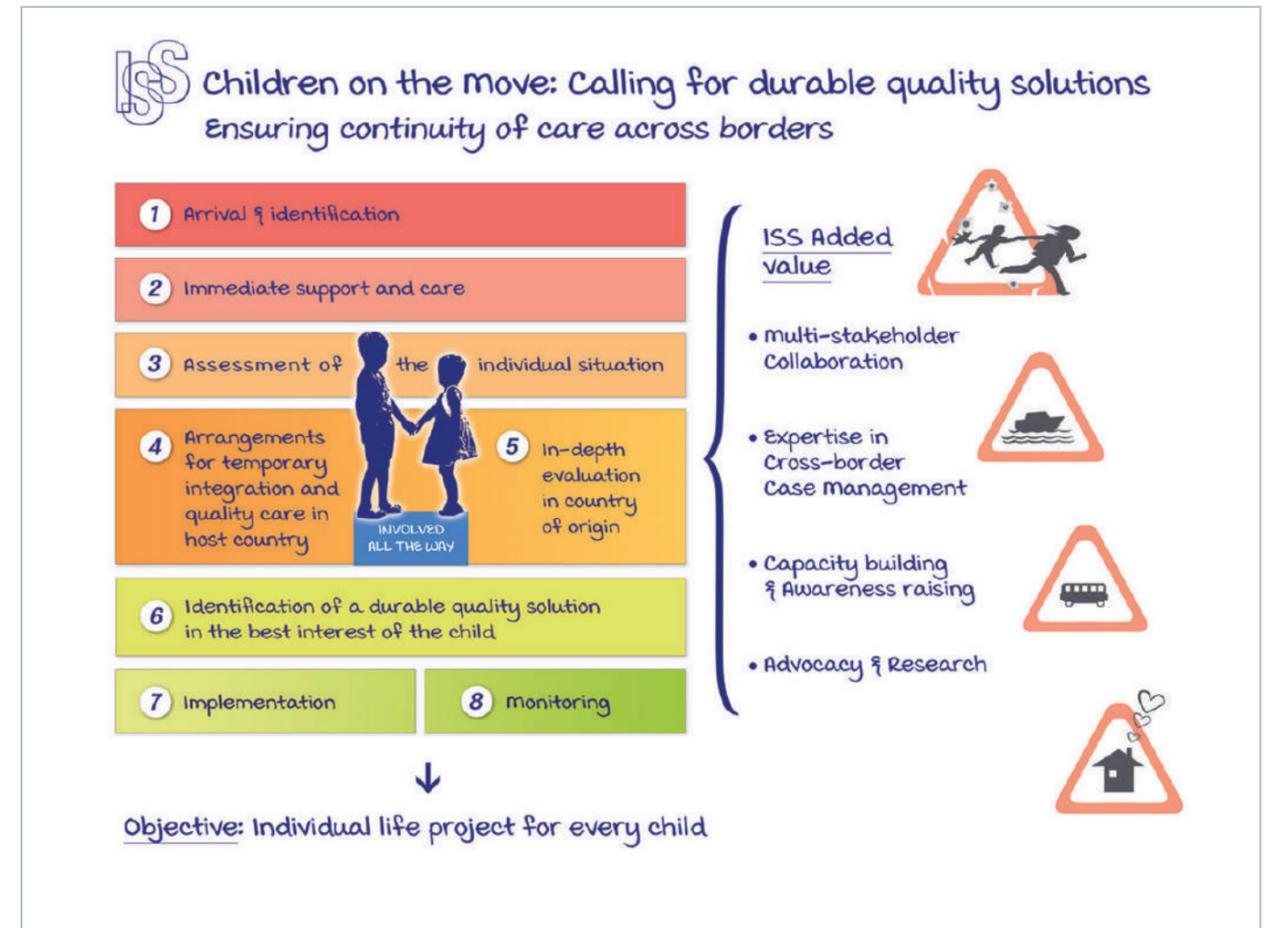
Our project aims to facilitate full access for families to information and cross-border mediation professionals on a global level.

### Key achievements:

- ◆ An already internationally recommended **Guide to International Family Mediation**, the result of an extensive consultation process. It is intended for families and professionals supporting or accompanying these families and is available in eight languages.
- ◆ **A dedicated multilingual International Family Mediation website** accessible to families and professionals alike as an innovative resource offering unrestricted access to existing services and networks in the field.
- ◆ **A Charter for International Family Mediation Processes** developed by an international group of experts and family mediators is now ready! A multifaceted document whose main purpose is to inform families, professionals and authorities on standards serving as a base to develop training materials and set the ground for a global network of qualified international family mediators.



## CHILDREN ON THE MOVE



Providing effective and durable solutions for **children on the move** and beyond the emergency phase is an essential need.

UNICEF 2016 report\* notes **"Nearly 50 million children have migrated across borders or have been forcibly displaced** and this is a conservative estimate; more than half of these children – 28 million – have fled violence and insecurity; an estimated 17 million children are displaced within their own countries – children in dire need of humanitarian assistance and access to critical services..."

In 2016 ISS's highest authority, the International Council, voted unanimously to renew the network's commitment to protect Children on the Move and commissioned the General Secretariat to develop and implement a special global project focused on this issue.

\*UNICEF, [Uprooted, the growing crisis for refugee and migrant children](#), sept. 2016

Several initiatives have followed:

- ◆ An ISS manual advocating durable solutions and continuity of care for children across borders is in the making. The manual will be instrumental in providing clear guiding principles to ISS cross border casework (to be released mid 2017).
- ◆ A multi stakeholder initiative saw the light in 2016, starting with a partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to discuss **how to better protect children along the migration route by building capacity of professionals on the ground**. With the support of IFRC, a mapping of existing legal frameworks, principles and training related to children on the move has been finalised.
- ◆ In 2017, the same multi stakeholder initiative has a special focus on training professionals dealing with children on the move in emergency situations and the development of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is also being considered.

### CONNECTING HUMANITARIAN WITH ALTERNATIVE CARE AND SOCIAL WORKERS

“Having previously worked for the International Red Cross in emergency response settings, initiating and developing a partnership with the IFRC has been particularly satisfying. In protecting children on the move, it is important to connect humanitarian with alternative care and social workers to make sure immediate, short and long term needs are met. Understanding and sharing expertise allows better services for children and families to be provided.

The work of IFRC and ISS is definitively complementary (as shown by the Spanish ISS member also being the National Red Cross Society), linking the daily Red Cross services to ISS individualised psychosocial and legal support, such as tracing and reuniting families. I am, therefore, very excited and proud that this multi-stakeholder initiative is being coordinated by an ISS-IFRC team!”

**Fanny Pauwelyn-Baert**  
Coordinator Resource Development and Partnerships



## CASES & STORIES

### CROSS BORDER SOCIAL ASSESSMENT & PERMANENT CARE SOLUTION

UK / China (Source ISS UK and ISS HK)

Jing was born in the UK from illegal Chinese migrant parents. She had to be placed in a foster family when she was two as neither of her parents could take care of her (her father was deported to China and her mother suffered from mental illness). Subsequently the UK Central Protection Authority (CPA) contacted ISS UK, to have an assessment conducted to evaluate the parenting capacity of both maternal and paternal families in China.

ISS UK referred the request to ISS Hong Kong, who conducted multiple assessments in mainland China and attended the UK Court hearing via a video link. The Court determined that Jing was to be placed under the long-term care of her maternal grandparents in Northern China.

A family reunification plan followed, organised between ISS UK, ISS Hong Kong and the British government. Jing flew to Beijing with her foster mother, accompanied by a British social worker. ISS Hong Kong joined them to meet with the maternal grandparents and acted as a mediator and interpreter, assisting both sides to understand the complex cultural differences. Jing is now in the care of her grandparents.

## INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF A FAMILY (IRC)

IRC is a programme of the General Secretariat. Since 1997, the IRC has been an active advocate and recognised leader in the development and implementation of international standards relating to intercountry adoption and alternative care of children deprived of their family or at risk of being so. It promotes the exchange of knowledge, experience and dialogue between professionals of governmental and non-governmental agencies throughout the world.

In the autumn of 2017, the IRC will celebrate its **20th anniversary** with a special focus on achievements and future challenges.

Sample of IRC services:

- ◆ A multilingual Monthly Review dispatched to over 5000 professionals (10 issues a year), analysing the latest developments in adoption matters and protection of children deprived of their family.
- ◆ A multilingual online publication centre that has more than **3200 references and other information material on child protection laws and policies in 192 countries.**
- ◆ **An average of 20 country situation analyses** published yearly, detailing protective measures for families, alternative care options and step-by-step analysis of the adoption procedure. In addition, and this year alone, 13 country briefs were prepared by the IRC for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- ◆ An average **200 requests for expertise and technical support** are received yearly by the IRC from over 50 countries, covering a variety of themes linked to cross-border child protection and intercountry adoption.

### PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF THEIR FAMILY

"Facilitating the exchange of experience and dialogue between professionals of governmental and non-governmental agencies throughout the world lies at the heart of the IRC mission. Equipping professionals to better protect children drives the services that we provide. Thus, we work daily to develop and implement international standards related to supporting families in their care giving roles, as well as to promote quality alternative care of children and to advocate for ethical adoptions. In all situations, we insist that the individual needs of each child must guide all laws, policies and practices."

**Cécile Jeannin**  
Coordinator Research & Publication  
**Mia Dambach**  
IRC Director

"The ISS/IRC services are highly appreciated. The studies, analyses and investigations provided are an important and indispensable source of information in our intercountry adoption work. The country situation reports in particular remain a valuable tool for us".

**Norwegian Central Authority**  
January 2017



## VOICES OF BENEFICIARIES

### ISS HELPED ME LOCATE MY BIOLOGICAL FAMILY

Melanie, Germany, 20 years old

"I was adopted in 1996 at the age of three months by a German couple. When I turned 15, I began to be interested in my biological family. Since this adoption was anonymous, the Youth Authority in Düsseldorf recommended that I get in contact with the International Social Service in Frankfurt\*. The person in charge of my case was very understanding, but at the same time alerted me and my adoptive parents that there might be a long and difficult road before us. At times, I felt it was like looking for a needle in a haystack.

Three years later - a long time of waiting, worrying and no results - we received notification that my biological family had been found in São Paulo and that they were very happy to learn about me and my quest. Last summer I went to Brazil and had a chance to discover my roots and of course my extended family. Without the support of "Familie international Frankfurt" \*an important part of my life would have remained in the dark and I am very glad that this was not the case."

\*FiF ISS Germany

## LEADING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES

All around the world, for many different reasons, hundreds of thousands of children cannot live with their parents. As early as 2004, ISS started working on the development and promotion of the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'. These guidelines set out the principles for policy and practice that have been agreed upon globally to help tackle this issue.

**Alternative care** is defined as care for orphans and other vulnerable children who are not under the custody of their biological parents. It includes adoption, foster families, guardianship, kinship care, residential care and other community-based arrangements to care for children in need of special protection, particularly children without primary caregivers.

Since then, ISS has worked with a number of international agencies such as UNICEF, SOS Children's Villages, Better Care Network, Save The Children and many others to implement these standards, with the help of tools such as the 'Moving Forward Handbook' and the 'Tracking Progress Initiative'.

(All available online: [www.alternativeguidelines.org](http://www.alternativeguidelines.org)).

In October 2016 ISS co-organised an international conference, 'Building on the Momentum' with these international agencies, hosted by the University of Geneva and the International Institute for the Rights of the Child. With 400 participants and over 30 leading experts working together in plenary sessions, the "Momentum" conference was The **2016 international event for alternative care professionals**. 42 poster presentations displayed the work of grassroots organisations and provided a valuable opportunity for networking and developing new partnerships.

A **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** was launched in March 2017, targeting 60,000 practitioners and policymakers working with children in need of alternative care, with courses starting in May 2017. By the end of this six week interactive course, participants will have a better understanding of the key principles, pillars and implications of the UN Guidelines, taking in views from across the world.

## FIELD VISITS AND TAILOR-MADE ADVICE AT THE REQUEST OF AUTHORITIES

### ◆ Cambodia:

In 2016, at the request of the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs and with the full support of UNICEF, ISS and The Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) conducted a joint needs assessment in the country. The drafting of a capacity development plan to strengthen foster care, domestic and intercountry adoption was the main focus of the mission. After multiple meetings throughout Cambodia, a special workshop gathered more than 100 participants in the capital city.

Government officials, civil society actors and UN experts reviewed the preliminary findings and recommendations of the assessment mission, providing feedback as necessary. Taking into account this advice and in collaboration with the Cambodian government and other partners, ISS readies itself to recommend reforms on both alternative care and adoption practices to match international standards.

### ◆ Morocco:

The Moroccan Ministry of Justice mandated ISS in 2016 to undertake a study on the administrative and legal procedures applicable in Kafalah situations in Morocco. The ISS team carried out a thorough desktop review of existing laws and policies in the country, followed by telephone interviews with high profile officials from the Ministry of Justice, judges from various provincial tribunals for children and youth, as well as civil society actors.

Pursuing the mandate from the Ministry of Justice, an ISS evaluation joined by UNICEF Morocco headed to Morocco early May 2017 to compare the results with field realities and produce a final report and recommendations for follow up action.



## CASES & STORIES

### FAMILY TRACING

Germany / Algeria (source ISS Algeria)

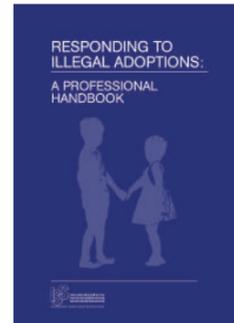
Mrs. SD, a German national, contacted ISS Germany looking for her father, who she had never met and who she believed lived in Algeria. ISS Germany referred the case to ISS in Algiers, to start tracing SD's father.

The father had moved several times over the period, which made tracing him quite difficult. However social workers finally found him but had to deal with his initial strong denial that he had a daughter. After sustained mediation efforts, the father agreed to initiate a first contact with Mrs. SD and to travel to Germany to meet his daughter and grandchildren.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

### ◆ **Illegal Adoptions:**

Worldwide more than half a million children have been adopted abroad and have become adults. Today, many of them are relentlessly searching for their origins and history. At times, these searches can uncover illegal practices that occurred during their adoption process. **Responding to illegal adoptions: a professional handbook** was published in 2016. This handbook is an important source of information for professionals supporting individuals affected by an illegal adoption, offering hope and answers.



### ◆ **International Surrogacy**

Coordinating a first of this kind consultative research process involving 35 experts, ISS is drafting the **'Principles for a better protection of children's rights surrogacy arrangements'**. The first twelve principles are ready; to name a few:



- ◆ Respecting **human dignity** of each individual
- ◆ Preventing **the sale of children**
- ◆ Ensuring **birth registration**
- ◆ Ensuring **nationality** for the child
- ◆ Preventing the child's right to know his/her **origins** by preserving the child's birth information

Other principles will cover: the consent of surrogate mother, the evaluation and preparation of intending parents, the commercial aspects, parental responsibility, child as an individual rights holder and right to non-discrimination

### ◆ **Kafalah:**

"Kafalah" is generally known as a person's (kafil) commitment to voluntarily take care of the needs, maintenance, education and protection of a child deprived of his/her family (makfoul). Kafalah does not provide parenthood status between the kafil and the makfoul.

In 2016, ISS decided to update its 2008 comparative Kafalah study carried out in ten countries by identifying current legislation, policies and practices. Different perspectives and promising practices that encourage a child rights-based approach have been identified and will be shared in the study. This work will be continued throughout 2017. Taking into account the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children' and the 1996 Hague convention, ISS will be advocating for the continuity of care across borders.

#### **Kafalah our way to becoming parents**

"My husband and I live in Morocco. We could not have children and after many attempts, some medically assisted, we decided to start Kafalah procedures. After long months of waiting and having been through psychosocial evaluations, a special judicial decision finally granted us parental responsibility and custody over Karim, a 4 year old boy who had spent his life in an orphanage. All efforts to reunite Karim with his biological parents had failed."

## CASES & STORIES

### CHILD ABUSE ALERT

Lebanon / Syria (Source ISS Lebanon)

After two harsh years of sexual abuse from her father and after several attempts of self-harm, Hala, a Syrian refugee in Lebanon, told Himaya (ISS Lebanon) her story and asked for help.

Hala grew up as a victim of domestic violence basis even before leaving her homeland looking for safety in Lebanon. The father would beat her mother frequently and throw her out of the house; once alone with his daughter, he manipulated her into believing that the only way to bring back her mother was if Hala agreed to sexual intercourse with him. Hala would disclose the abuse to her mother, but being utterly afraid of the father, Hala's mother could offer no support whatsoever.

In response to Hala's initial reported abuse, Himaya's social worker started the assessment and initiated a legal procedure to protect the minor. In parallel to the legal actions, the psychosocial team followed up with Hala and her mother providing continuous phone support and then arranging a short term shelter for the mother and daughter through local partner organisations.

Finally with the support of relatives and friends from the community as well as the collaboration between Himaya's legal department and the different courts involved in child and family protection in Lebanon, the father is now in prison and for the first time in her life Hala and her mother are secure and feel safe in their own home.

### CROSS BORDER SOCIAL ASSESSMENT & PERMANENT CARE SOLUTION

USA / Mexico (Source ISS USA & ISS MEXICO)

José was deported from the USA to his homeland Mexico, leaving behind his wife Mariel and their son Javier. Mariel began to use drugs and by the time Javier turned 5 years old, he had been removed from his mother's care permanently and placed in foster care.

The USA Child Protection Authority (CPA) noted that Javier had irregular but positive contacts with his father. The CPA reached out to ISS USA to enquire about possible solutions for Javier and in turn ISS USA contacted ISS Mexico. ISS Mexico informed the father that his son Javier was in foster care and that a thorough assessment was necessary to determine if placing Javier in his father's care was in Javier's best interest. ISS USA and Mexico worked closely together to provide a comprehensive assessment and assisted the US Court to take an informed decision. The Court decided to return Javier to his father's care.

ISS Mexico supported José and his family throughout the process and assisted them in making an appropriate plan to integrate Javier in his "new" family environment across the border. ISS Mexico assisted directly with Javier's integration, conducting daily home visits for the first two weeks and once a month thereafter for a year. The home visit reports were forwarded to the US CPA via ISS USA. The case was closed after a year.

## "A BETTER FUTURE IS POSSIBLE": APPLYING ISS EXPERTISE

'A better future is possible' for children with disabilities is a global program aiming to **promote family life and adapted care for children with disabilities without parental care**. ISS is convinced that numerous children with disabilities living in residential care could have a chance to grow up in a family environment through the targeted training, support and advocacy of professionals and officials.

The main beneficiaries of the programme are: children with disabilities living in residential care facilities, foster or biological families; families caring for children with disabilities, and professionals working with families and children.

ISS designed and implements this program since 2013 on a need / request basis in collaboration with national authorities and partners. Today the project is present in **Vietnam, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Mauritius and Mexico** with **Sri Lanka, Romania and Zambia** in concept stage.

### Methodology:

With ISS providing monitoring and technical assistance, a multi-disciplinary team of experts trains a national or local pool of trainers, who in their turn train professionals in providing social care support to families and foster families to prevent separation, carrying out a psychosocial assessment of children with disabilities living in residential care and preparing a "life project" for every child.

- ◆ A "**Manual for Professionals Working with Children with Disabilities Living in Institutions**" is the result of several years of work with a group of international multidisciplinary experts. The handbook is available in three languages.



- ◆ A "**Lifebook for every child living in residential care institutions**" offers a child-friendly way to collect and keep all relevant information relating to the life story of the child. The Lifebook is a tool for professionals to address, together with the child, sensitive issues about his/her origins, the reason for the placement, as well as a support for the preparation for a life in a family. (<http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/what-we-do-en/cwd-en>)



### Project Highlights:

- ◆ Second mission to **Mauritius** to provide technical assistance for government authorities on family mediation and foster care.
- ◆ External evaluation of the project in **Burkina Faso** underlining positive outcomes; 469 staff from 30 residential care facilities have been trained since 2014 and technical assistance to the government on foster care. The next phase of the project to start in 2017 is under consideration.
- ◆ Needs assessment mission in **Cambodia** with UNICEF Cambodia. A Plan of action to enhance alternative care opportunities for CWD without parental care. The POA will be implemented by ISS Australia.
- ◆ Early 2017, a first training mission in Monterrey in **Mexico** took place in collaboration with ISS USA and ISS Ecuador (Danielle's Children's Fund). This project focuses on separation prevention of children with disabilities from their families and their reintegration back into their biological families.
- ◆ ISS is contemplating expanding the programme further to **Sri Lanka** following initial requests for information received from the government.

## A NEW CHALLENGE IN EACH PARTNER COUNTRY

"In line with ISS core mandate to support vulnerable children out of parental care, we designed this specific project to help children who are most likely to spend their childhood in residential care. From one partner country to another, we observe a huge array of cultural contexts, child protection policies and practices.

In close collaboration with governments and national partners, ISS supports plans tailored to the country realities and priorities using our own expertise, independent experts and partner NGOs. I am proud to see how care and attitude towards children with disabilities can change for the better."

Marie Jenny  
Coordinator Special Projects



# VOICES BENEFICIARIES

## ISS REUNITED ME WITH MY DAUGHTER

Mohamed M., Algiers

" My entire family and I are grateful to Mrs Saadi\* for her understanding and perseverance in following up on our case. At first, I didn't believe for one second the story of this alleged daughter who turned out to be living in Germany with an adoptive family. Now, I am about to meet her and meet her children as well and I'm so happy about that."

\*Social worker, ISS Algeria



# 3. MEMBERS PROFILES



## NEW ZEALAND

Tena koutou (Maori for “Warm greetings to many people”).

ISS New Zealand has been a member of ISS since 1952. It is located within the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki and maintains close ties with the Office of New Zealand Central Authority for Intercountry Adoption.

ISS New Zealand’s main function is casework; as such, it finds the ISS network invaluable in helping to overcome the challenges of cross-border family conflict or difficulty. Some of the child protection casework is complex and urgency is a feature of case management, as the well-being of young children is often at stake.

ISS casework is primarily related to searching of origins and reunification with birth parents on behalf of adults who were adopted, intercountry adoption casework and requests for family assessments relating to the care and protection of children.

Since 2000 ISS New Zealand has administered a support Fund (in cooperation with ISS United Kingdom), set up by the British government to address the issues following the devastation of WWII, when thousands of children were sent overseas from Britain to populate far-flung parts of the then British Empire. ISS caseworkers across the network played an invaluable role in tracing long lost family members, facilitating travel and supporting the former child migrants through the emotional and sometimes cathartic experience of family reunion.

Every case is important and the difference that ISS can make in people’s lives cannot be underestimated.



## HAITI

Plan International (PI) is an organization that has been active worldwide for almost 80 years and 43 years in Haiti. PI which has been ISS Partner in Haiti for two years, works with vulnerable children, especially girls, to allow them to learn, lead, decide and thrive. PI Haiti (PIH) implements community development projects centred around the child and ensures the community gets involved throughout the projects. Moreover, PIH's vision focuses on giving young people a voice in decision-making processes that affect them.

PIH sees ISS work as essential in a society where childhood is not always given the appropriate attention and care. Weak legislation with regard to cross-border child protection makes it more complicated to work on these cases. ISS is one of the few worldwide organizations to put the child's best interest first, an indispensable task in view of the complex global migration situation.

## JAPAN

ISS Japan (ISSJ) was established in 1952, when Japanese society was striving to reconstruct after World War II, including assisting orphans and mixed-race children. ISS Japan has been working in child protection through a range of different types of interventions such as adoption, parent visitation support, nationality restoration and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Its aim is to provide professional social support to children in institutions and those on the move, or those in need of child-centred services.

Over the years, being a member of the ISS network has been advantageous to ISS Japan. ISSJ social workers exchange information with colleagues around the globe to provide quality services while working on cross-border social cases such as search for biological parents or visitation support (mediation) for a child after the breakup of binational families and the ISS network is highly regarded by foreign embassies and ministries in Japan. Local child welfare agencies also benefit from the network, which allows ISSJ to play a key role in promoting child protection and cross-border social work.



## CAPE VERDE

ACRIDES is an NGO entirely devoted to the promotion and defence of the rights of the child (and her/his family) and aims for the child's complete and harmonious development.

Being a member of ISS is very important to ACRIDES as Cape Verde has, for centuries, been an emigration country and people from Cape Verde now live all around the world. Today, Cape Verde has also become an immigration country, since many West Africans come to work there, both legally and illegally.

The development of tourism has led to a rise in human trafficking, especially related to prostitution rings. ACRIDES organized a mission in May 2016 to evaluate the situation of Nigerian girls sexually exploited on several islands, with the aim of helping the victims return to their country of origin.

Participating in the 2016 ISS Melbourne Conference has enabled ACRIDES to share its experience with social workers from around the world and to discover interesting ISS programmes and projects such as International Family Mediation, which it would very much like to implement in Cape Verde.

## LEBANON

Himaya was founded in 2009 as a specialized NGO in the child protection sector working on both prevention and intervention levels, ensuring accessible services to all beneficiaries across Lebanon. Himaya coordinates its work closely with different Lebanese ministries (Social Affairs, Justice, Public Health and Education). Its main international partners are UNICEF, UNHCR, The Global Smile Foundation MENA and ISS.

Since 2014, Himaya has been an ISS member and has been liaising with different ISS members all over the world, for example working closely with ISS-Switzerland on implementing the 'Safe Parks' project for Syrian refugee children. This partnership has been very beneficial to Himaya, helping it to grow its network, coordinate and share knowledge and experience with representatives from other countries.





## ECUADOR

In 2016, Danielle Children's Fund (DCF) Ecuador was contacted by the ISS General Secretariat to explore possible cooperation. In June of the same year both organizations signed a letter of intent, which made DCF a member of the ISS Global Network.

DCF is a Dutch NGO which has been operating since 2001 in Ecuador and Nepal. In Ecuador, DCF runs preventive family and community support programmes, offering mainly family therapy and social interventions. DCF also provides technical assistance to organizations that would like to shift from institutional towards alternative care for children. DCF is an active member of the Ecuadorian network "RED CONVIVENCIA" created in 2016 with the support of UNICEF and RELAF (Latin America Foster Care Network).

For more than 15 years, DCF has been capitalizing on its experience working in situations that put the right of the child to live in a family at risk. Its systemic approach goes beyond the child and its family, considering the global environment and the social worker as a facilitator to generate lasting options.

The collaboration with ISS has already been an enriching experience for DCF which has benefited from the ISS network know-how. DCF has been working on several cross-border social cases, where it successfully intervened by assessing families and community systems. Moreover, DCF recently participated in a training workshop as part of the ISS global programme "A Better Future is Possible" in Monterrey, Mexico. DCF looks forward to a continuous sharing and collaboration with the ISS Network.

## PAKISTAN

SANJOG was established as an NGO in Pakistan in 2006. Its vision is "Every child is free from all forms of abuse and exploitation" and its mission is "To promote the fundamental rights of children through advocacy, capacity building and a rights-based approach to service delivery".

Sanjog has been a member of the ISS network since 2016 with ISS UK (CFAB) acting as a reference member for training and support. Sanjog has valued the support and cooperation with ISS and CFAB and through this support has built capacity and polished its team's skills to carry out various types of assessments.

Sanjog is interested to become further involved in ISS activities by contributing to advocacy on child and family's welfare.



## CASES & STORIES

### CHILD WELFARE ASSESSMENT

Cayman Islands / Jamaica (source ISS Cayman Island)

A Cayman Islands resident, Mrs. TW, contacted the Department of Children and Family Services stating that her great grandson Shamar, 11 years old at that time and living in Kingston, Jamaica with his mother, was maltreated and suffered from neglect. Shamar was often sent to school without breakfast and with no provision for any other meal. His mother had reportedly locked him out of the house as Hurricane Matthew was threatening Jamaica.

ISS Cayman Islands talked to Shamar's maternal grandmother, who confirmed that he was subjected to all types of abuse and that she was ready and willing to cooperate with any intervention to protect her grandson.

The case was then reported rapidly to the Child Development Agency in Jamaica and a visit to the mother was conducted to assess the situation and her living conditions. This intervention in itself seemed to have been instrumental in jolting Shamar's mother into doing much better with her son. Several follow-up enquiries and information from the school and both the great grandmother and grandmother reported by ISS Jamaica have been positive. ISS continues to monitor the situation.

# 4. PARTNERS & DONORS

## ISS PARTNERS

### ◆ International Organizations

- African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Better Care Network
- Child Rights Connect
- Fundamental Rights Agency
- Hague Conference on Private International Law
- Hope and Homes for Children
- International Institute for the Rights of the Child
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- International Federation of Social workers
- Médecins du Monde
- RELAF (Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar)
- Save the Children
- SOS Children's Villages
- Spoon Foundation

### ◆ UN Bodies and UN Specialized organisations and EU institutions

- UNICEF
- UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- European Parliament Group on Children's Rights
- European Union and European Council

### ◆ Academic Partners

- Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland
- University of Aberdeen
- University of Cumberland
- University of Geneva
- University of Leiden
- University of St Andrews
- University of Verona

## A WORD OF THANKS TO OUR DONORS IN 2016

### ◆ Individual donors (who wish to remain anonymous)

### ◆ Foundations

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Accentus Fondation                    | Fondation Meyrinoise du Casino |
| Fondation Albatros                    | Fondation Philanthropia        |
| Fondation Dora                        | Fondation Pierre Mercier       |
| Fondation Ernst Göhner                | La Loterie Suisse Romande      |
| Fondation Hans Wilsdorf               | Oak Foundation                 |
| Fondation Lord Michelham of Hellingly | Société Générale de Luxembourg |

### ◆ Governments

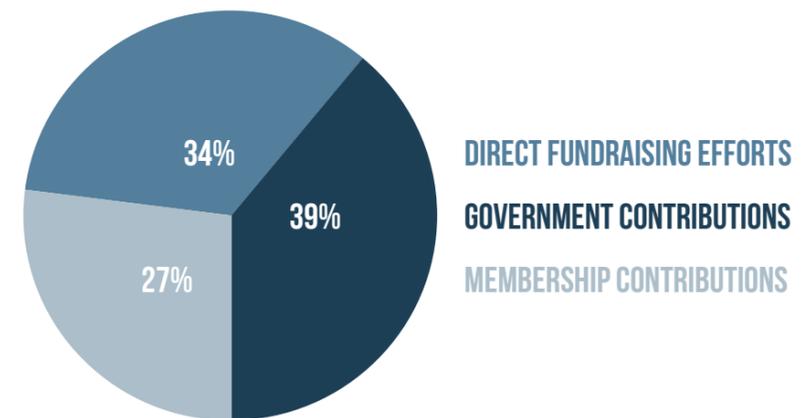
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|-----------|-------------|---|
| Andorra   | Germany     | The Netherlands                         |
| Australia | Iceland     | Norway                                  |
| Belgium   | Ireland     | South Africa                            |
| Canada    | Italy       | Spain                                   |
| Cyprus    | Luxembourg  | Sweden                                  |
| Denmark   | Malta       | Switzerland (Federal and Geneva Canton) |
| Finland   | Monaco      | United Kingdom                          |
| France    | New Zealand |   |

### ◆ Others

- Capital Group
- Your own Lab
- Villi

## ISS GENERAL SECRETARIAT 2016 SOURCES OF INCOME

Financial Report 2016 is available upon request



\*For donors who want to support our national ISS members, please find their contact information here: <http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/home/network>



# 5. ISS PEOPLE



**Carolyn Housman**  
Executive Director  
CFAB, ISS UK



"I joined the UK member of ISS (known as Children and Families Across Borders, CFAB) in January 2017 and have been genuinely impressed by the dedication and hard work of the CFAB team. We haven't been at full strength for the last six months, yet individuals have worked extra-long hours to ensure children needing help receive it.

I have had a warm welcome from Jean Ayoub and Fionn Skiotis; both have helped explain the network and the ambitions agreed by members for the future, which is exciting to say the least! Over the last three months I have also had offers of support and collaboration from the USA, Israel, Germany – to name a few – and I am really looking forward to putting names to faces as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

While we may feel challenged by current international developments, it's vitally important that we continue to do our work and provide our services in a spirit of international cooperation and solidarity and above all, we must put the best interests of children foremost in everything we do."



**Damon Martin**  
 Manager  
 Intercountry Adoption Services  
 ISS Australia



"It has been an honour to collaborate with Marie Jenny - Coordinator Special Projects, General Secretariat, Geneva - on the project 'A Better Future is Possible for Children with Disabilities Living in Institutions'. After four missions to Vietnam working on this project with Marie, we have cemented a strong working relationship built on trust and respect.

Furthermore, working on this project has enabled me to enhance my social work skills while developing a greater understanding of the unique and complex needs associated with children living in institutional care in a developing world country. I commend Marie and the ISS General Secretariat for the initiatives of this project that are making a difference to the lives of children with disabilities globally!"



**Connie Nxumalo**  
 GB member  
 Deputy Director General  
 ISS South Africa



"ISS South Africa has been active with the ISS network since 1999 efficiently working with all its members and partners to safeguard and protect the rights of families and children worldwide. ISS South Africa prides itself to have managed tracing and family reunification support outside national borders. We see ISS is a strategic organisation advocating for child and families protection and ensuring implementation of international child protection instruments supported by domestic legal frameworks of various countries affiliated to ISS.

As a country we continue to benefit from ISS and we would like to reiterate our commitment to the vision and mission of ISS."



**Hafida SAADI**  
 Social worker  
 ISS Algeria

"Being part of the ISS network is a rewarding experience, especially considering the hardships every social worker encounters. Our contacts with the Secretariat general are excellent. We wish we could attend more meetings and trainings."





**Elaine Weisman**  
Inter-country Social Worker  
ISS USA



“Joining with the ISS-GS in the Children with Disabilities project has been a valuable opportunity for ISS-USA to support an important global initiative spearheaded by the GS, while strengthening the long-standing institutional connection between ISS and DIF-Mexico. The training curriculum in Mexico deviated from previous project sites to reflect the local context of family separation for children with disabilities and allow for a more robust exploration of best practices for the de-institutionalization of children with disabilities across a global stage.

Fortifying networks of family and community support for families with children with disabilities represents a vital step in preventing separation through institutionalization, making reunification of institutionalized children with disabilities into family settings a safe and sustainable option. The participants at the training in Mexico were a group of highly-skilled professionals engaged in thoughtful, constructive conversations on ways to improve the lives of vulnerable children at risk of separation from their families. The six-day event, a collaboration between ISS-GS, ISS-USA and DIF Monterrey, showcased how the construction of multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral and multi-country partnerships have the potential to produce systemic change.”



**Dinesh Raj Sapkota**  
Director  
Creating Possibilities,  
ISS Nepal



“We are honoured to be part of the ISS network. Thanks to collaboration with ISS members from Australia, Hong Kong and Switzerland, we successfully completed several cross-border cases in 2016. Being not so familiar with the procedures, these members also helped us drafting final reports.

The General Secretariat’s work is essential to us. The training proposed during the International Council in Melbourne in April 2016 has proven to be very useful. We also appreciate the sharing of information that allows us to grasp global challenges, as well as the various publications, especially concerning International Family Mediation which underlines the needs of the most vulnerable beneficiaries, i.e. children.”



CASES & STORIES

**FAMILY SOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION**

Germany / Malta (source ISS Malta)

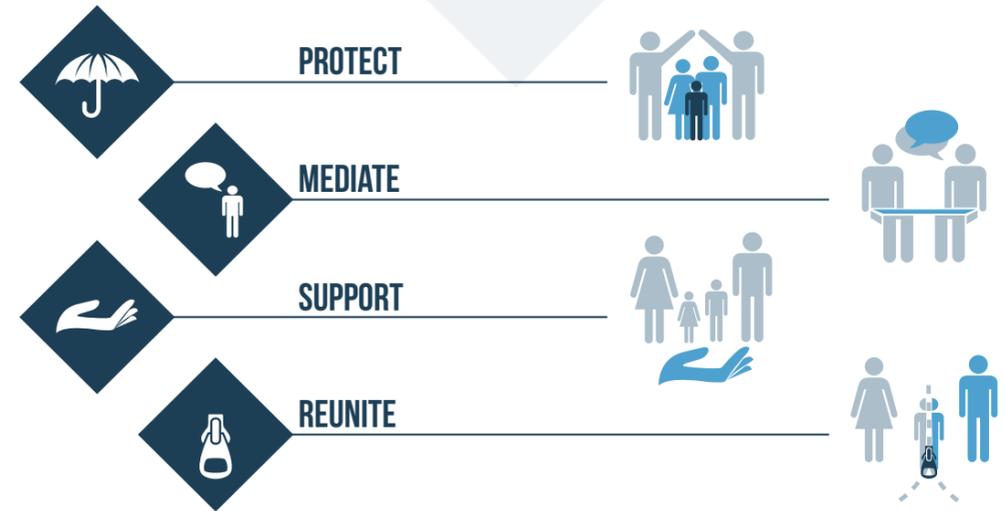
Klement (10) and Elija (12) were living in Germany with their mother until she died, due to an accident. With no other relatives in Germany and no declared father, the two boys were placed in residential and foster care.

A first assessment found that Klement and Elija’s only remaining relatives were their maternal grandparents in Malta. The German authorities requested a social assessment report on the grandparents, in order to assess their capacity to care for the boys. ISS Germany was contacted to organize the assessment through ISS in Malta.

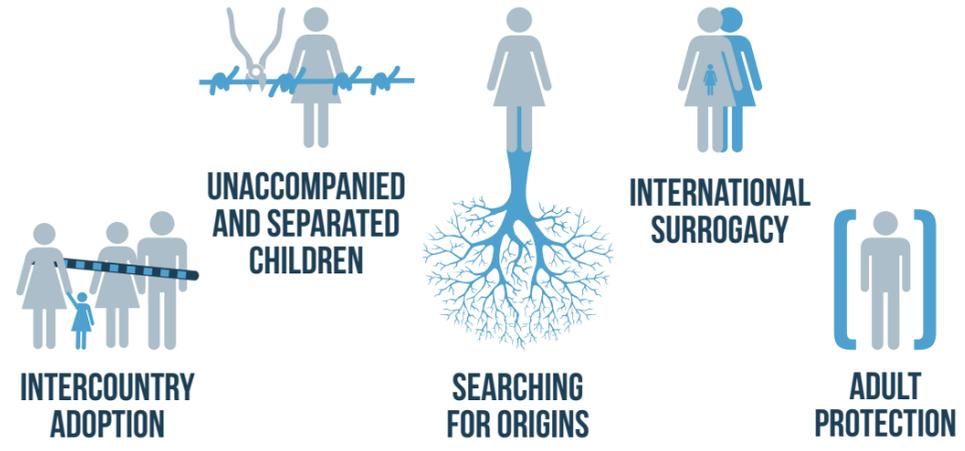
Extended exchanges and collaboration between ISS Germany and ISS Malta (Appogg) completed the assessment and gave a favourable opinion regarding the grandparents’ situation and willingness to care for the children, who were then allowed to travel to Malta to be reunited with their grandparents. The children are now settled, attending school and happily living with their closest family. Finding a safe home for both Klement and Elija is a fine example of what ISS does at its best.



# 6. ISS IN A NUTSHELL



**ISS** SINCE 1924 COUNTRIES 110 PEOPLE REACHED 7,000,000



# 7. TRANSFORMING ISS

ISS is indeed in full transformation, 93 years after its foundation; we are designing the organisation for the next 100 years, an organisation that is able to adapt its services to an ever-changing world population that will continue to mutate, mix and move willingly or unwillingly, in order to find peace, stability and safe shores.

Our transformation, a diligent work in progress since 2014, is about:

- ◆ ISS's capacity to better support and protect children and families separated by international borders
- ◆ Guaranteeing the quality and the timeliness of ISS services worldwide
- ◆ Sustaining the full network's core activities time and time again
- ◆ Making ISS's voice heard across the four corners of the world to influence and change child protection policies and practice
- ◆ Designing and implementing global programmes to fulfill ISS's mission and sustain its vision

ISS's General Secretariat, based in Geneva since its foundation in 1924, works towards fulfilling ISS's mission and vision. It coordinates the activities of the network, moderates the debate between governance, management and core activities and articulates the ISS voice and opinions, as well as its advocacy messages all around the world, through international conferences, children's rights debates and interagency meetings, as well as learning initiatives and MOOC style training for professionals.

To adjust its expanding structure to changing needs in the social sector and boost its global efficiency, but also to adapt to repeated economic and financial crises since 2008, the General Secretariat opted for reorganizing around a flexible modus operandi that relies on core and support staff. The result should be a stable and efficient staff workforce with a high output, complemented by an amazing group of interns and volunteers who contribute strongly to the Secretariat's operations.

Thank you for your willingness to learn more about ISS and if you would like to help, your generosity will always be well used and reported on. Meanwhile the entire ISS network is grateful to you.

**Jean Ayoub**  
Chief Executive Officer

[www.iss-ssi.org](http://www.iss-ssi.org)